

This week, after a long August recess, bipartisan bills were introduced to implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission with regard to reorganizing the intelligence operations of our country in order to better protect our people and our country. Earlier this week we met, as I said to the gentleman, with the President, who asked us to send him legislation quickly.

The reason for my question is, the Democratic leader, after requesting participation by your side of the aisle and a determination was made not to participate, introduced legislation drafted to incorporate the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. In addition to that, Mr. MCCAIN and Mr. LIEBERMAN have introduced legislation in the Senate. Mirror legislation has been introduced by a Member on your side and a Member on our side as well.

The President, as you know, changed his position on the budget authority for the National Intelligence Director and apparently now supports that, so there may well be good bipartisan White House-congressional agreement.

Clearly the American public are very concerned about this, we are very concerned about it, and I know the gentleman is very concerned about it. We want to put our intelligence community in the best possible posture, as the 9/11 Commission recommended, to respond to the terrorist threat to this country.

My question is, therefore, sir, can we expect, do you think, to perhaps take the bipartisan bills that have been introduced in both the Senate and the House, mirror images of one another, and work on those bills and pass them prior to the time that we either recess or adjourn prior to the election?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, and I thank the gentleman for yielding, let me say we were all very impressed in a bipartisan way when the report of the 9/11 Commission came forward. We know that President Bush has already, through executive order, implemented many aspects of the 9/11 Commission report.

The gentleman also is aware of the fact that immediately upon release of that report, the Speaker of the House called on the chairmen and ranking minority members of numerous committees here in the House, over a half dozen committees, called on them to hold hearings. There were 25 hearings held in the House of Representatives during the August district work period, and I believe that some very important information came forward.

One of the goals that the Speaker has set forth is to ensure that we do proceed with legislation. He very much wants to, before we adjourn in October, see the passage of legislation. Exactly what shape that will take is, of course, up to the legislative process that we have here. We are very well aware of the fact that we have seen the introduction of the 9/11 Commission report,

and we know that a lot of people are thinking about that.

I will say that I am particularly honored, as I know the gentleman is, that a Member of this body, the former chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and vice chairman of the House Committee on Rules, has been nominated to be the director of Central Intelligence. He has obviously spent a great deal of time on this, and many of our colleagues have expertise on this.

So we will in the coming weeks I hope be able to fashion legislation so that the goal that the Speaker has set forth of passage of legislation before we adjourn in October will come to fruition.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those comments. We are hopeful that we can in fact work together in a bipartisan fashion, as seems to be started by the Senate and in this House as well, to accomplish the objective of the early passage of a reorganization to make us better to respond to the terrorist threat to this country. We hope that that will happen.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2004

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

□ 1900

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RESTORING FREEDOM OF SPEECH TO AMERICA'S HOUSES OF WORSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am back on the floor today, as I was prior to the August break, to talk about freedom of speech in our churches and synagogues and mosques of this country.

Many people do not realize that from the beginning of this great Nation, until 1954, there was never any restriction of what a minister or a priest or a rabbi might say regarding policy issues, political issues, and actually making reference to the teachings in the Bible and the Torah. But what has happened over the last few years is that there is an element in this country, usually it is the Americans for Separation of Church and State, which is a metaphor, that seem to want to monitor what is being said in our churches and synagogues. This year it seems to be worse than ever before.

I want to start my brief remarks about Bishop Smith, a Catholic bishop in New Jersey. On March 27 at St. James Church, Bishop Smith asked why, in our presumably democratic country, Catholic churches fear that the Internal Revenue Service will punish them if they speak out on a politician's positions on issues. I further quote Bishop Smith: "The first amendment protects the free exercise of religion. Separation of church and state does not mean that the church and its members should not voice or advocate for their positions."

I say that, Mr. Speaker, because there is a real problem in this country.

About 2 months ago, Bishop Sheridan, the Catholic bishop of Colorado Springs, sent a pastoral letter to the 120,000 Catholics in his diocese, and it was a pastoral letter. He mentioned in the letter that the Catholic Church stands for protecting the unborn, opposed to euthanasia, opposed to stem cell research, and believes that marriage should be between one man and one woman. In this pastoral letter he said nothing about Mr. KERRY or Mr. Bush, but because he did use the word prolife, Mr. Lynn, Barry Lynn, director of the Americans For Separation of Church and State, wrote a letter and complained to the Internal Revenue Service that the bishop and the church should lose its tax-free status.

Well, let me explain very quickly. I have done 4 years of research on this issue, and this is my fourth year of putting a bill in to return the freedom of speech to our churches and synagogues. What I found out was that in 1934 when the Congress decided that the churches could qualify for the 501(c)(3) status, they had no restriction of speech, absolutely none, zero. But what happened is in 1954, Lyndon Baines Johnson had the H.L. Hunt family opposed to his reelection to the Senate, and the H.L. Hunt family had 2 501(c)3s; not churches, but think tanks. And Senator Johnson put in an amendment on a revenue bill going through the Senate in 1954 that was never debated, no hearings, that basically had